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Kenya: The Ethnic Key to Moi's Future

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An Intelligence Assessment

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ALA 83-10047
April 1983

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Kenya: The Ethnic Key to Moi's Future

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [redacted]
the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It
was coordinated with the Directorate of Operations
and the National Intelligence Council. Comments and
queries are welcome and may be addressed to the
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[redacted]

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Kenya: The Ethnic Key to Moi's Future

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 30 March 1983
was used in this report.*

Over the past seven months, President Moi has intensified efforts to reduce the dominance of the Kikuyu tribe, a course that challenges Kenya's ethnic structure and poses serious problems for the country's stability. Ethnicity has long been a major ingredient in Kenyan society, and the Kikuyu, the country's largest, wealthiest, and most powerful tribe, are the keystone of Kenyan politics. President Moi, a member of the relatively minor Kalenjin tribe, has maintained his position so far only through his skill in dealing with other ethnic groups, particularly the Kikuyu.

The catalyst for Moi's recent campaign to limit the influence of the Kikuyu was the coup attempt in August 1982. Moi viewed that attempt in tribal terms—even though growing popular discontent with Kenya's economic slump and the deteriorating political situation were contributing factors—and was especially disturbed by the key role played by the Kikuyu. As a result, he has begun to challenge the Kikuyu's privileged position on a variety of fronts and has edged toward formation of a new ethnic coalition of minor tribes that is designed to lessen Kikuyu influence. We believe he will continue this policy in the months ahead.

Moi can probably remain in power at least until the 1984 presidential election—and has a fairly good chance of winning—because the Kikuyu are divided and he is adept at playing the tribe's leaders against one another. The Kikuyu's continuing strong influence in the government and Kenya's single party make them a threat to Moi's position, however, if he overplays his hand and causes them to unite in opposition against him in the coming election. Although we believe it is less likely, Kikuyu unhappiness with Moi could lead, in the extreme case, to widespread civil disorder. This, in turn, could prompt either a military takeover by senior officers—who are sympathetic to Moi and would want to restore order—or a spontaneous uprising by lower ranking Army personnel largely from the Luo and Kikuyu tribes.

We believe Kenya will continue on its pro-Western political and economic track as long as power remains in the hands of either Moi, the current Kikuyu political elite, or the conservative military leadership that is dominated by Moi's fellow Kalenjin and their Kamba allies. We believe the country would be likely to veer toward a leftist or radically nationalist foreign policy only in the less likely event that Kikuyu-led discontent continued to escalate and ignited a successful coup by the lower ranks of the military.

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Kenya's ethnic conflicts are longstanding, domestically rooted, and do not result from external meddling. We have no evidence of specific Soviet Bloc measures to heighten tension. Over the years the Soviets have been unsuccessful in efforts to cultivate the generally pro-Western, capitalist-oriented Kenyan leadership. Libya reportedly has tried to expand its influence in Kenya, but there is no reliable information that it has mounted a major effort or met with any significant success. In the unlikely event, however, that the situation in Kenya becomes seriously destabilized, we believe both the Libyans and Soviets would move quickly to cultivate disaffected groups and exploit the situation to their advantage.

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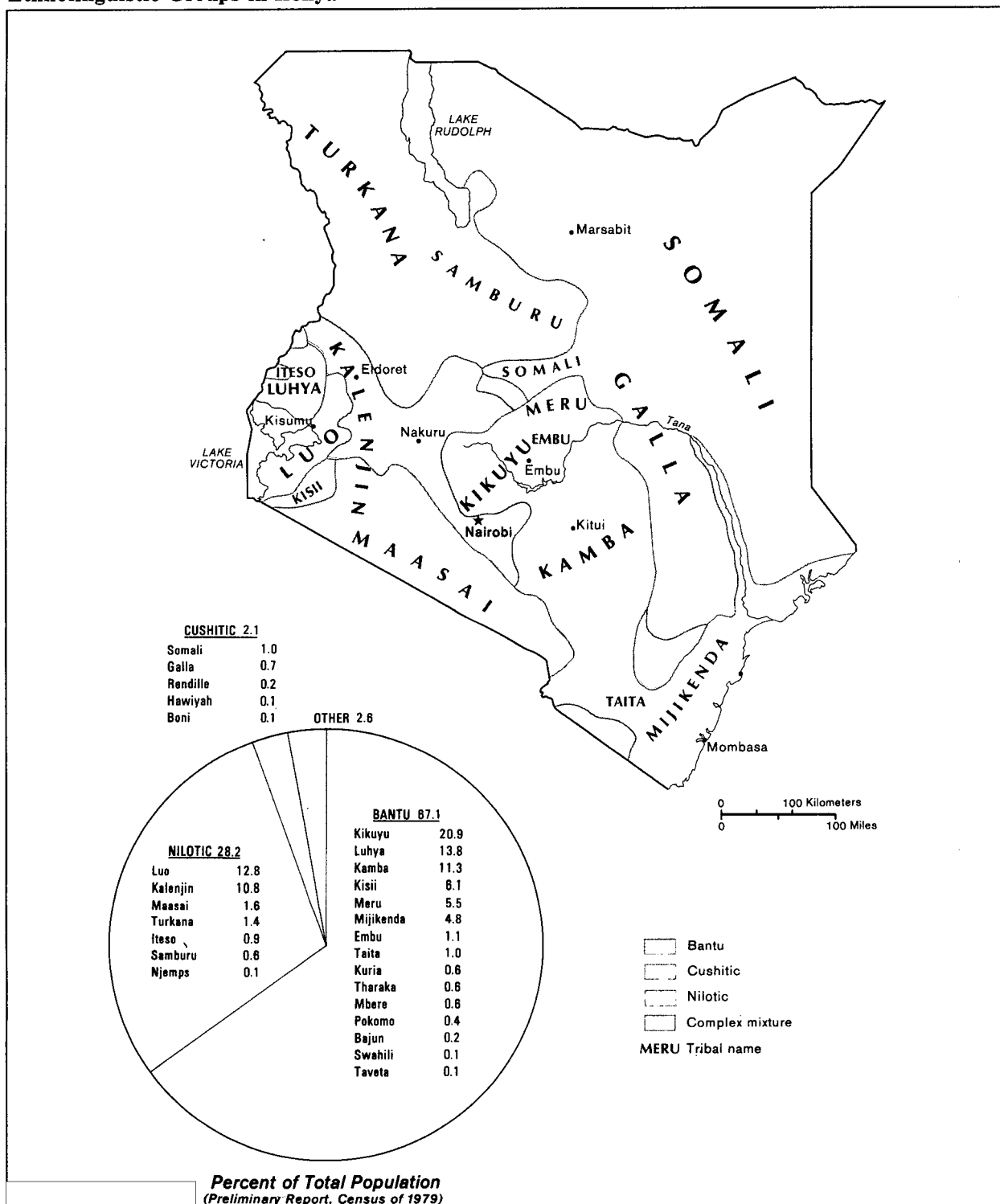
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Figure 1
Ethnolinguistic Groups in Kenya



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Kenya: The Ethnic Key to Moi's Future

Introduction

The Kikuyu have long been the dominant tribe in Kenya, politically, economically, and geographically. Their position and power have caused resentment among other tribes—including the Kalenjin, the tribe of President Daniel arap Moi—and tribal rivalries have been a significant factor in Kenyan politics since the independence movement.¹ The coup attempt last August, which in part was inspired by the decline in Kenya's once-promising economy, was interpreted by Moi as tribally motivated. It greatly exacerbated existing tensions and led Moi to initiate a series of moves to promote the ascendancy of the Kalenjin and allied groups at the expense of the Kikuyu. Because of the Kikuyu's power, such actions are dangerous for Moi and for political stability in Kenya. The Kikuyu are angered by Moi's actions, but because of intratribal divisions they have so far been unable to mount an effective resistance. This paper will analyze the path on which Moi has recently embarked, consider the impact of his policies on Kenya's political stability, and discuss the implications of a range of possible results for US interests in Kenya.²

Moi's Ethnic Politics

When Kenya's founding father and first President, Jomo Kenyatta, died in 1978, Moi, as Vice President, constitutionally became President for a 90-day period preceding new elections. According to the US Embassy, Moi occupied the vice-presidency mainly because

¹ See Appendix for a detailed discussion of Kenya's heritage of Kikuyu dominance.



Daniel arap Moi

President

A skillful grass-roots politician, Moi compensates for his lack of substantive expertise and higher formal education with a shrewd political instinct. Because he has learned to operate masterfully in the cut-throat atmosphere of Kenyan tribal politics, he has remained in the highest ranks of the party and government for over 20 years. In August 1982 he weathered Kenya's first coup attempt since independence; in its wake he has moved to quell dissent and avert further challenges to his leadership. A member of the minority Kalenjin ethnic group, he draws his support from the country's non-Kikuyu, the Army, and the business community. He is strongly pro-Western.

Moi, 58, is widely traveled and has visited this country several times. He is a former school teacher who has substantial business interests in Kenya. Divorced, he has seven children. Moi is from the Rift Valley Province.

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Kenyatta and his principal advisers—all Kikuyu—were unable to find a Kikuyu leader who was acceptable to all of them and who possessed even a shadow of Kenyatta's popularity and prestige. The succession issue was further complicated by Kenyatta's unwillingness to groom a successor. Indeed, we believe that Kenyatta may have made Moi his Vice President in large part to dilute the power of the several major Kikuyu politicians who were contending for the post, and thus for a chance to succeed Kenyatta.

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**Charles Njonjo***Minister for
Constitutional Affairs*

Njonjo has long been a power behind the scenes in Kenyan politics. He has been in the Cabinet since independence in 1963, serving as Attorney General for 17 years until he received his current post. A ruthless politician, he has ambitions of becoming vice president of Kenya's sole political party, KANU, and thus a de facto vice president of Kenya. He is not on good terms with Mwai Kibaki, Vice President of Kenya, who is his main rival to succeed to the presidency. Although he is a member of the influential Kiambu (southern) branch of the Kikuyu ethnic group, Njonjo has not developed a strong tribal base. [redacted] he lacks popular support and also is unpopular with the Army. According to US Embassy officials in Nairobi, Njonjo has a reputation as a bureaucratic infighter and as a close adviser to and longtime associate of President Daniel arap Moi. [redacted]

Educated at the London School of Economics, Njonjo is deeply pro-British and is often called "the black Englishman." He is about 63, is married to a Kenyan-born white woman of British extraction, and has two children. [redacted]

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During the 90-day interregnum Moi took advantage of these circumstances to campaign successfully for a full term as President. We believe that he was acceptable as a compromise candidate to the Kikuyu leaders because he belonged to the Kalenjin—a relatively fragmented group that they did not consider a serious threat. They probably saw him as no more than a figurehead who would temporarily hold office while they continued to control events and resolve the question of who should pick up Kenyatta's mantle. [redacted]

Moi, however, moved quickly to consolidate his position by pitting one Kikuyu leader against another. He named Finance Minister Kibaki, a Nyeri Kikuyu, as Vice President and continued Charles Njonjo, a Kiambu Kikuyu, in the important post of Attorney General. By putting two rivals in positions of relatively equal power, he precluded either from gaining ascendancy and weakened their ability to challenge

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**Mwai Kibaki***Vice President; Minister
of Home Affairs*

Once widely regarded as one of the most intelligent, competent, and popular government officials in Kenya, Kibaki lost considerable personal prestige and political influence in a 1982 Cabinet shuffle. At that time, he lost the finance portfolio he had held since 1969 and assumed the less prestigious home affairs post. His diminished standing has been attributed to [redacted] a lack of ambition, and a strained relationship with President Daniel arap Moi. His reputation may have suffered further since the coup attempt against Moi in August 1982 in that he is the de facto head of the northern (Nyeri) branch of the dominant Kikuyu group, some of whose members were implicated in the abortive coup. As Minister of Finance, Kibaki impressed international observers with his in-depth understanding of economic issues. During his later years in the post, however, he came under increasing criticism as a result of the steady decline of the nation's economy. [redacted]

A British-educated economist, Kibaki, 51, has held a series of Cabinet posts since 1964. Also, he has been Vice President since 1978. He speaks English well. He is Roman Catholic. Married, he has several children. [redacted]

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him. Neither has been able significantly to expand his power base and both have been forced to perform under the watchful eye of Moi. [redacted]

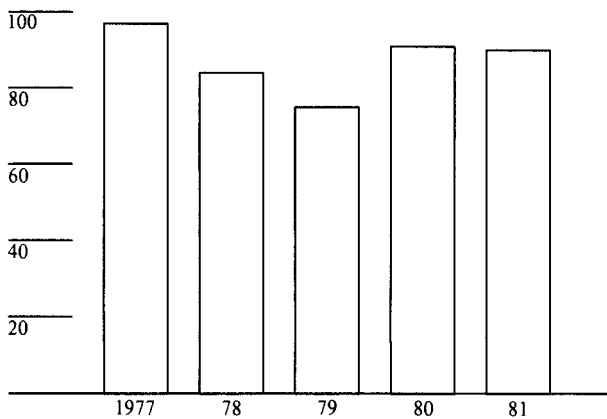
Although Moi lacked the towering presence of Kenyatta, he shrewdly went about adding to his support. In contrast to the isolation Kenyatta cultivated, he traveled widely throughout Kenya. At the same time, he emphasized his long association with Kenyatta and his plans to continue Kenyatta's moderate policies by adopting the slogan "Nyayo" (Footsteps) for his regime. According to the US Embassy, Moi distributed patronage more equitably than Kenyatta had among

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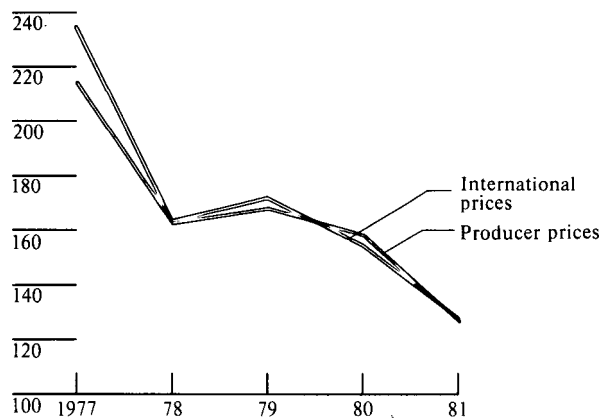
Figure 2
Kenya: Coffee Production and Prices

Production

Thousand metric tons

**Prices**

Cents per pound



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Kenya's ethnic and political groups—many of which either lost out under Kenyatta or feared a similar fate under Moi. Most significantly, he brought back into the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU) and placed in senior—although largely ceremonial—government positions the Luo tribe's patriarch Oginga Odinga and other Luo leaders. The Luo had traditionally been the Kikuyu's strongest rivals. Odinga and the other Luo associated with him had been politically inactive since Kenyatta banned their party in 1969.

At the same time, the US Embassy reports that although Moi gave some individual Kikuyu prominent roles in his administration to avoid alienating the tribe, he moved to reduce its influence as a group. In 1980, for example, he dismantled the Kikuyu tribal organization—the Gikuyu, Embu, Meru Association (GEMA). Ostensibly a social welfare organization, it was in reality controlled by Kenyatta's family and associates and exercised considerable political and economic power.

Economic Woes Weaken Moi's Grip. We believe Moi might have been able to sustain his ethnic balancing act longer if the economy had not slumped badly. The economic decline more clearly exposed underlying demographic and institutional liabilities that had begun to affect events during the last years of Kenyatta's rule. Heading the list of problems was Kenya's staggering 4-percent population growth rate—one of the highest in the world—which put pressure on land supply and urban facilities. In addition, in our opinion, the desire of both Kenyatta and Moi to involve the government in virtually all aspects of the economy by means of inefficient public corporations has hampered productivity. In agriculture, government-imposed producer prices and restrictions on distribution have for several years kept production increases below the population growth rate. These policies have resulted in a steadily rising migration of young productive farmers into the cities.

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Against this backdrop, a combination of high world oil prices and a declining demand for coffee—Kenya's principal export—led to falling foreign exchange reserves and a growing foreign debt. The recession in the West and increased transportation costs also have hurt the tourist industry, a major source of foreign exchange. These circumstances produced a current account deficit that, we estimate, has averaged around \$1 billion during each of the past three years. Moreover, Kenya has suffered high inflation—now officially at more than 20 percent and likely to jump to more than 30 percent later in 1983, according to the US Embassy. The Embassy also reports that unemployment has increased substantially, to as much as 30 percent in urban areas.³ []

Coping With Opposition. Mounting economic problems provided opposition leaders with an opportunity to attack governmental policies. In early 1982, Luo patriarch Odinga publicly attacked the government's economic performance. He also criticized Moi's decision to grant the United States access to Kenyan air and naval facilities. []

[] there were widespread rumors that Odinga would reconstitute his own party and turn it into an essentially socialist and anti-US organization. []

Moi responded by banning Odinga from political activity—a move that heightened tensions between the Luo and his government.⁴ We believe that Moi and his Kalenjin kitchen cabinet became convinced that Odinga's criticism weakened the government's authority and that a stern reaction, first against the Luo and then against other critics, was necessary to reestablish Moi's primacy. Moi's awareness of his weakness as a member of a minor tribe and the

⁴ We believe Moi's fears about Odinga were exaggerated. Despite Odinga's permanent hold on the Luo community, he seems to have only a limited following in the country as a whole. His socialist economic formulas have little appeal in view of neighboring Tanzanian President Nyerere's failed economic experiments, nor does his anti-US bombast receive much of an audience in view of Kenya's basically pro-Western orientation and the significant economic benefits that accrue to the economy of the coastal region from port calls of the US Navy. []

likelihood that Kenya's economy would get worse before it got better presumably reinforced his sense that he should take steps to safeguard his position. []

In early 1982, Moi took the offensive. According to the press, he threatened to detain dissident members of parliament and warned all members not to discuss topics derogatory to the government on the floor. He also closed three small independent Nairobi colleges when the students—both Luo and Kikuyu—protested the country's growing economic problems. According to the US Embassy, a contributory reason for Moi's decision to close the schools was his belief that Marxists had infiltrated the University of Nairobi and that the country's intellectuals did not respect him because of his meager education. []

According to press reports, Moi then removed Kenya's internationally renowned author, Ngugi wa Th'iongo, from his post at the University of Nairobi and banned his recent works. Moi had been particularly angered by Ngugi's criticism of government corruption and may also have worried about Ngugi's growing status as a spokesman for the idea of greater Kikuyu brotherhood. At about the same time, Moi also turned to the use of political detention for the first time in his presidency by imprisoning seven dissident university lecturers and students for criticizing the government. []

The culmination of Moi's efforts to bolster his position came in June 1982 when he pushed a constitutional amendment through parliament that formalized the existing situation by making KANU the sole legal party. We believe that he sought with this step to lay to rest the specter raised by Odinga of a new party that might mobilize tribal opposition to the government. []

Moi, in our judgment, may have thought that by taking these steps he was freeing himself from the need to cater to leaders of different tribes who threatened his position—particularly Njonjo and Kibaki of the Kikuyu and Odinga of the Luo. Indeed, many critics quickly drew a twofold lesson not much to Moi's liking: first, the regime's increasing repression left little room for a loyal opposition. Second, that

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in the absence of channels for nonviolent dissent people who disagreed with Moi would have to resort to clandestine plotting and direct action to effect the changes they sought. Moi reinforced that lesson shortly after the establishment of the one-party state when he cracked down on press freedom by ousting the editor of a leading newspaper that had criticized the government. [REDACTED]

The Coup Attempt and Its Aftermath

We believe that these deteriorating economic and political conditions contributed to the coup attempt on 1 August 1982 conducted by members of the Kenyan Air Force. In Nairobi, the plotters—mostly Luo and Kikuyu enlisted men—seized armories, the radio station, and the university, and set up roadblocks throughout the downtown area until the conservative, disciplined Army—with its many Kamba officers and enlisted men—was able to quell the challenge and restore order. A similar sequence of events occurred at two airbases outside Nairobi.⁵ [REDACTED]

Tribal Purges. Political. According to US Embassy reporting and the press, Moi saw the challenge in tribal terms and initially believed that most of the perpetrators were Luo. As a result, he sacked a Luo cabinet minister, replaced him with another Luo, widely disliked in that community, and dismissed the second-most prominent Luo from his position as chairman of the Kenya Film Corporation. He also charged Odinga's son with treason—a crime carrying a mandatory death sentence—and seized the aging leader's passport as well as those of several other Luo notables. Moi placed Odinga under house arrest, but shied away, we believe, from imprisoning the Luo leader for fear of creating a martyr. By clamping down on Luo leaders and placing unpopular members of the community in positions of authority, Moi clearly sought to isolate and divide the tribe, even at the cost of destroying his own ties to it. [REDACTED]

As the extent of Kikuyu involvement in the plot began to emerge, Moi was faced with a far more challenging problem. We believe that although Moi had never trusted the Kikuyu, he had presumed that his balancing between Njonjo and Kibaki was sufficient to

⁵ The Army, created and trained in the British model, thus assumed its historical apolitical role in putting down the threat to the government. [REDACTED]

divide his principal Kikuyu challengers and to minimize their threat. According to the US Embassy, however, as he became convinced that the real perpetrators of the plot were Kikuyu, with less politically astute Luo following along, he decided to reduce Kikuyu influence throughout the power structure. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] there is a growing belief among the Kikuyu that the President has decided to remove them from all positions of political power in the country. He has already sacked a number of civil servants and has threatened repeatedly to shuffle his cabinet. According to the US Embassy, in the November byelection in Nakuru North—a Kikuyu district—Kikuyu voters were routinely turned away from the polls by the police. Intimidation and voter fraud combined to elect a Kalenjin. Although Moi has taken no direct action against Njonjo or Kibaki, he has reduced their political influence by cutting back on their access to him. They are, in our view, cowed and uncertain about their future. [REDACTED]

Moi has thus far moved gradually and appears fully aware of the risks he is taking in challenging the Kikuyu, who have a historically dominant position in Kenyan society. Nonetheless, the US Embassy and press reports indicate that he has now begun to purge the security apparatus, where he has sacked numerous senior Kikuyu, including the police commissioner and the commander of the General Service Unit (GSU). [REDACTED]

Military. Moi has also pursued the purge within the military. [REDACTED]

The recent appointment of a Kamba to head the Second Brigade puts all four brigades in the Kenyan armed forces under either Kamba or Kalenjin leadership. [REDACTED]

The US Embassy reports that a Kikuyu backbench member of parliament has claimed that there is deep and growing tension between the essentially Kamba

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Secret**Senior Security Officials**

Position	Precoup (Tribe)	Postcoup (Tribe)
Chief of General Staff	Jackson Mulinge (Kamba)	Jackson Mulinge (Kamba)
Deputy Chief of General Staff and Army Commander	John Sawe (Kalenjin)	John Sawe (Kalenjin)
Chief of Staff of the General Staff	Oliver Cromwell Mkungusi (Teita)	Joseph Musomba (Kamba)
Deputy Commander of the Army	Haji Mohamed (Somali)	James Lengees (Maasai)
Commander of the Air Force	Peter Kariuki (Nyeri Kikuyu)	Haji Mohamed (Somali)
Commander of the Navy	Eliud Mbilu (Kamba)	Eliud Mbilu (Kamba)
Police Commissioner	Ben Gethi (Nyeri Kikuyu)	Bernard Njiinu ^a (Kiambu Kikuyu)
Commandant of the General Service Unit	Peter Mbuthia (Nyeri Kikuyu)	Erastus M'mbijjiwe (Meru)

^a Bernard Njiinu is unpopular among fellow Kikuyu.

and Kalenjin Army leadership on the one hand and the large number of Kikuyu in the junior ranks on the other. [redacted] this tension has recently been exacerbated by the arrest of several junior Kikuyu officers, whose relatively high education levels, leadership qualifications, and Kikuyu ethnicity made them politically suspect. [redacted]

We believe Moi is attempting to ensure future loyalty of the armed forces by building a loyal minority coalition made up of his own Kalenjin tribe, the Kamba, and other small groups. In our judgment, Moi is comfortable with the Kamba. It was mainly Kamba Army leaders, for example, who steadfastly supported the government during the coup attempt. Moi has rewarded a number of them with promotions. A relatively young Kamba general was named Chief of Staff to the Commander of the Armed Forces, General Mulinge, who also is a Kamba. [redacted]

According to the US Embassy, the military's Kamba leaders have increased their political influence since the uprising attempt. The Kamba generals, for example, encouraged Moi's decision to arrest and replace senior Kikuyu security officials whose loyalty was

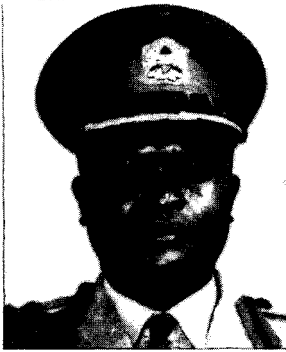
suspect. At present, Mulinge is making many of the important decisions concerning the armed forces that previously had been referred to Moi. Although the President is listening to the Army on some issues, he is not giving in to all its wishes. [redacted]

Socioeconomic.

[redacted] beyond limiting the Kikuyu's security and military role, Moi has also threatened their economic interests. He has, for example, replaced Kikuyu with Kalenjin on various parastatals, including the boards that control purchases and distribution of produce and cereals. [redacted]

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**Jackson Kimau Mulinge***Chief, General Staff,
Armed Forces*

The most influential and powerful figure in the armed forces, Mulinge enjoys the full confidence of President Moi. He also has the respect and support of the Army rank and file. He played a key role in ensuring stability in Kenya after the death of President Jomo Kenyatta in 1978 and helped suppress an abortive coup by disgruntled military officers in August 1982. After the coup attempt, his influence with Moi increased, and Moi gave him responsibility for reorganizing the armed forces. Although he has been expected to retire since at least July 1980, he will probably stay on for the near term to oversee the widespread changes in the military. He has always been cordial to US officials, who consider him to be a professional military officer.

Mulinge received his military training in the United Kingdom. He is wealthy and has extensive interests in ranching and cattle exporting. Mulinge, who is about 58, is a Kamba. Married, he has several children.

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Kikuyu also worry, according to the US Embassy, that they may be expelled from their land in the Rift Valley. This land was traditionally Kalenjin territory until Kikuyu landholding companies moved in after independence.

Moi's attention has even extended to the Ministry of Education. he is removing Kikuyu education officials in charge of selecting applicants to government-subsidized secondary schools and replacing them with Kalenjin. Traditionally, the Kikuyu had used their hold on these administrative positions to nominate members of their own tribe.

New Alignments. Moi, in his search for a new base of support for his government, has brought Kenya to the verge of a fundamental realignment of the ethnic groups that hold paramount political power. If he continues on this path, the long-dominant Kikuyu could find themselves the outsiders. Governing in their stead, under Moi's aegis, would be minor ethnic groups, led politically by the Kalenjin and militarily by a combination of the Kamba and the Kalenjin. Additionally, Moi could co-opt other ethnic groups by giving them a larger share of political spoils and privilege than they ever received under the Kikuyu.

Possible Outcomes and Implications for the US

We believe that Kenya's economic slump is likely to continue and that the resulting social and political tensions—along with the legacy of last year's coup attempt—will lead Moi to continue his repressive policies. Although Moi still has considerable room to maneuver, including the ability to reverse himself, on the basis of his behavior over the last several months we believe it unlikely he will do so. In our view, Moi is all but certain to continue his efforts to pit the country's largest ethnic groups against one another and to forge a controlling coalition of minority tribes. The Kikuyu's continuing strong influence in the government and in Kenya's single party would make them a threat to Moi's position, however, if he overplayed his hand; moving against top-level Kikuyu leaders or further accelerating the replacement of lower and middle level Kikuyu bureaucrats could unite the Kikuyu against him.

According to the US Embassy, Moi may seek a new mandate by calling an early election, gambling that none of his potential antagonists has yet forged a broad base of popular support. We do not believe Moi is likely to take such a step, however, because of his concern over the political risks involved. If the election is held as scheduled in 1984, it is likely to be preceded by intense jockeying for position within the Kenyan leadership. Nonetheless, we believe Moi's political skills and his opponents' divisions will give him a fairly good chance to win another term as long as the economy does not suffer dramatic deterioration.

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As long as Moi continues in office we believe that Kenya will retain its basically pro-US policy and will look to the United States for still greater economic and military aid. The public image of the Kenyan-US military relationship, however, is closely related to Moi's political position. To date, public criticism of the United States has been limited to the statements of Luo leader Odinga. We believe, however, that a more visible US military presence in Kenya under the aegis of a weakened and repressive regime would increase the possibility of anti-US protests. In our view, under such circumstances Moi's leftist opponents would be quick to identify the United States with the repressive regime, and such criticism could strike a responsive chord among the increasing number of disadvantaged Kenyans. [REDACTED]

Even if Moi wins reelection, his position will remain shaky. The Kikuyu still control much of the state administration, the economy, and KANU. We believe that unless Moi repairs his relations with the Kikuyu, that tribe will be increasingly inclined to put aside its internal differences and unite to oppose Moi and the minority tribes supporting him. Given the Kikuyu elite's commitment to free enterprise and ties to the West, its ouster of Moi by either constitutional or extraconstitutional means probably would not produce any significant alteration in the government's domestic or foreign policies, except that the spoils of office and economic development would again be redistributed to the benefit of the Kikuyu. [REDACTED]

In the event that Moi was not toppled but appeared incapable of maintaining order in the face of Kikuyu-inspired unrest or other disorder, the largely Kamba- and Kalenjin-led military might intervene. Although the traditionally apolitical military has increased its political influence under Moi, we believe it would probably not want to maintain for long the burdens of governing. More likely, it would look for someone who would maintain order and respect the position of the military and its Kamba and Kalenjin officers. Because of the military leadership's pro-Western bent, Kenya would be likely to remain on a pro-free market course supportive of the United States even during an interim period of military rule. [REDACTED]

The ethnic composition of the middle level and junior ranks of the Army poses a conceivable, although less likely, challenge to the government. Although the Kamba and Kalenjin who dominate the top levels of the Army support Moi, there is some restiveness among middle level and junior officers and enlisted men where there are larger numbers of Luo and Kikuyu [REDACTED]

We believe such military leaders would be inclined to expel the old leadership completely—breaking with the tribal political system of the past—and to call for an end to corruption and for more populist and possibly leftist economic policies. [REDACTED]

If extremists in the lower ranks did take over, they could be expected to tilt Kenya away from the United States, adopt a nonaligned policy, and seek assistance from both East and West. In return for aid from Communist countries, they would tend to be more receptive to Soviet requests for port calls by naval vessels. Although a leftist government would probably seek closer ties with left-leaning neighboring regimes with similar ideologies, including that in Addis Ababa, its freedom of action would be limited by ingrained Kenyan suspicion of the Communists. Public opinion would probably restrict ties to the East to nonmilitary areas and would work generally against Kenya's becoming a Soviet client state along the lines of Ethiopia. [REDACTED]

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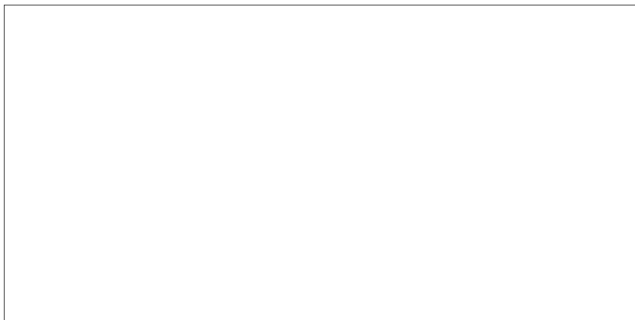
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In the unlikely event that the situation in Kenya became seriously destabilized, we believe both the Libyans and Soviets would move quickly to cultivate disaffected groups and exploit the situation to their advantage.

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Kenya has probably become a more fertile ground for outside meddling since the coup attempt, but we doubt that Tripoli will have much success. In our view the dissident groups targeted by the Libyans are fragmented and without effective leadership. We believe influential government officials and party members are basically too pro-Western to be vulnerable to Libyan blandishments. Moreover, the Muslim community—comprising only 7 percent of the population—is not a major influence in Kenyan political life.

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Appendix

Heritage of Kikuyu Dominance

The Kikuyu are the most powerful ethnic group in Kenya because of their large numbers and because of the advantages they gained during the period of British colonial rule. The tribe constitutes 21 percent of Kenya's population of 17.8 million and is the largest of its 42 ethnic groups. Historians note that the colonial government was established in Kikuyu territory, Kikuyu lands were set aside for white ownership, and regular contact between the colonial government and the Kikuyu immersed this ethnic group in the British system to a far greater degree than other Kenyan tribes. Thus, although the Kikuyu in some ways were the most victimized by the colonial system, they also benefited the most. [REDACTED]



Jomo Kenyatta

With some justification, this ambitious and politically astute tribe considers itself the architect of Kenya's independence. The Kikuyu were the first tribe to seek redress of grievances from the colonial authorities and later were the driving force in the nationalist movement. They bore the brunt of British military actions to subdue the struggle for independence and they provided Kenya with its founding father—Jomo Kenyatta—a commanding figure who governed the country for 15 years after the departure of the British in 1963. [REDACTED]

The 16,000-man armed forces are the only instrument of power in Kenya that the Kikuyu have not controlled. The Kamba tribe—11 percent of the population—has long made up a large portion of the Army. British colonial policy in Kenya had been to recruit the Kenyan African Rifles primarily from the Kamba, largely on the assumption that their martial values, lack of cohesiveness, and relative backwardness made them a more pliant and reliable force. According to the US Embassy, at the time of independence most high-ranking Army officers and senior noncommissioned officers were Kamba, as were 30 percent of the enlisted men. [REDACTED]

Tribal loyalties were submerged briefly during the nationalist struggle and the first years of independence. Kenyatta carefully balanced tribal and regional

interests in his first government in an attempt to breathe life into his slogan *Harambee* (Let's pull together). He retained the essential features of the flexible, multiethnic administrative structure of the British colonial administration. This system included an elaborate network of patron-client relationships through which economic development funds were distributed and the loyalty of the security forces was maintained. Kenyatta's policies gave rise both to an African middle class and to a sense of opportunity among the country's underprivileged. Key segments of society were co-opted, and, in general, tribal animosities were muted by a general sense of shared enterprise. [REDACTED]

As a corollary to his nationalistic paternalism, Kenyatta in 1969 made Kenya a de facto one-party state with a strong central government by dissolving the only opposition party and making it clear he would not tolerate dissent. Indeed, he extolled the one-party concept as an expression of Africanism. Comparing his political party, the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU), to an extended family, he promised that his government would be representative of all the country's ethnic groups. [REDACTED]

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We agree with the academic view that Kenyatta—despite his general maintenance of a multiethnic administrative structure—tended over the years of his presidency gradually to give more of the fruits of independence to the Kikuyu, and that the early sense of national harmony began to develop some discordant notes. In particular, Kenyatta fostered Kikuyu dominance of the bureaucracy and placed the Kikuyu in effective control of the ruling party. The US Embassy reports that Kenyatta also made serious efforts to dilute the strength of the Kamba within the armed forces and security services by appointing more Kikuyu officers. In his later years, in fact, Kenyatta made Kikuyu ethnicity a virtual prerequisite for membership in the General Service Unit (GSU)—Kenya's elite force responsible for internal order and presidential security. [redacted]

Scholars report that the Kikuyu during the late 1960s reaped considerable economic benefits from repossessing tribal lands in central Kenya that had been appropriated by British settlers. While in European hands, this area had been favored in various ways, including greater access to the modern technologies of economic development than most other regions of the country. As a result, the Kikuyu took over quality farm lands with well-developed facilities, enabling them to acquire a leading economic role commensurate with their political status. Kenyatta continued the trend by favoring Kikuyu areas with a disproportionate share of government funds and development projects. [redacted]

The Luo—the second-most influential tribe—have been particularly resentful of Kikuyu dominance, according to scholars. The Luo have always been in the shadow of their traditional rivals, and the Kikuyu have dealt harshly with the Luo's periodic challenges. [redacted]

A focal point for modern Luo discontent has been the treatment of the tribe's patriarch—Oginga Odinga—who in the mid-1960s was Vice President and Minister of Home Affairs as well as a power in KANU. His frequent leftist criticism of the government led Kenyatta to strip Odinga of much of his power. [redacted]

As a result, Odinga in 1966 resigned from both the government and the ruling party to form the Kenya Peoples Union (KPU). The new party called for quasi-Marxist, populist measures to solve Kenya's problems. Western observers believe that the vast majority of Luo joined Odinga's organization. His activities contributed to intertribal tensions and produced a Kikuyu backlash. In 1969 Tom Mboya—an outstanding Luo leader who was considered the most likely successor to Kenyatta—was assassinated. The overwhelming view of Western observers and Kenyans at that time was that the Kikuyu clique surrounding Kenyatta planned the assassination. [redacted]

In our judgment, other tribes besides the Luo were jealous of the Kikuyu's increasing power and privilege. No tribe, however, was strong enough to stand up to the Kikuyu on its own, and their fragmentation and general isolation from each other militated against coordinated resistance. The Kikuyu kept a tight grip on power and in 1971 quashed an ill-conceived plot by a small number of Luo and Kamba military officers to overthrow Kenyatta. The ease with which the Kikuyu did this only reinforced the widespread sense of powerlessness among non-Kikuyu tribes. [redacted]

The ascendancy of the Kikuyu over other tribes encouraged factionalism within the tribe itself as quarrels developed over the spoils of ethnic hegemony. According to anthropologists, the most advantaged of the three major Kikuyu groups—the Kiambu Kikuyu—has also been the smallest in number. Centered in Nairobi, the Kiambu Kikuyu worked more closely with the colonial government, were better educated, and had a stronger economic base than the other Kikuyu. Kenyatta was a Kiambu, and the group's current spokesman is Charles Njonjo, Minister for Constitutional Affairs. [redacted]

The Murang'a Kikuyu are the mother clan for the tribe as a whole, according to scholars, and they believe their role has been somewhat usurped by the Kiambu Kikuyu. The Murang'a, located to the north of Nairobi, spearheaded much of the opposition to

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British rule and felt the Kiambu shortchanged them on land, jobs, and political influence after independence. Charles Rubia, Minister for Works and Housing, is leader of this clan. [REDACTED]

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The third major clan, the Nyeri Kikuyu, also complained of getting short shrift. Many of them believe that the Kiambu Kikuyu were responsible for the murder in 1975 of J. M. Kariuki, a popular Nyeri politician and spokesman for Kenya's have-nots whose proposed reforms threatened Kiambu economic and political interests; Vice President Mwai Kibaki is now the leader of the Nyeri. Like the Murang'a, this clan resides in an area to the north of Nairobi. [REDACTED]

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Despite these intratribal divisions, however, we believe the Kikuyu have more cohesion than most other Kenyan tribes. Although at cross-purposes over their relative share of power, they remain united in defense of their privileges relative to other ethnic groups. In our view, their common sense of purpose, coupled with their political and economic power, makes it difficult to govern without their support [REDACTED]

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